

**Economic and Social Council**

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Commission on the Status of Women

Forty-ninth session

28 February-11 March 2005

Agenda item 3

Follow-up to the Fourth World Conference on Women and to the special session of the General Assembly entitled "Women 2000: gender equality, development and peace for the twenty-first century"

United States of America: draft resolution

Economic Advancement for Women

The Commission on the Status of Women,

Recalling General Assembly resolutions 58/142 of 22 December 2003 on women and political participation, 58/206 of 23 December 2003 on women in development, and 59/246 of 22 December 2004, welcoming 2005 the International Year of Microcredit,

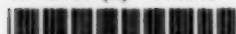
Recalling also its agreed conclusions on eradicating poverty, including through the empowerment of women throughout their life cycle, in a globalizing world, and its agreed conclusions on the participation and access of women to the media and information and communication technologies, and their impact on and use as an instrument for the advancement and empowerment of women,

Welcoming the report of the United Nations Commission on the Private Sector and Development entitled "Unleashing entrepreneurship: making business work for the poor",¹ which, inter alia, stressed the important role of women entrepreneurs in achieving economic growth in developing countries,

Welcoming also the June 2004 action plan of the Group of Eight entitled "Applying the power of entrepreneurship to the eradication of poverty",

Noting that hundreds of millions of women worldwide live in poverty and that the majority of poor women throughout the world live in rural areas, where their livelihoods are dependent on subsistence and smallholder agriculture,

¹ See <http://www.undp.org/cpsd>.



Emphasizing that poverty can be reduced when poor women and men are provided education, equal opportunity, economic freedom, the benefits of good governance and the rule of law,

Recognizing that improving women's economic status also improves the economic status of their families and their communities,

Acknowledging that full incorporation of women into the political, social and economic decision-making in their societies can enhance development policies,

Expressing its concern that women are often under-represented in official policy-making and lack equal access to education, financial services, property and inheritance rights and other legal protections and that discrimination against women poses a major obstacle to their economic advancement,

Recognizing that information and communications technology can be a vital tool for training women in entrepreneurial skills, accessing financial services and market information and providing small businesses with access to marketing opportunities,

Recognizing that respect for the rule of law, political and civil liberties, human rights, democracy, the promotion of economic freedom and non-discrimination are necessary elements to promote sustainable economic growth,

1. *Calls upon* Member States to:

(a) Eliminate discrimination, provide equal access, actively encourage participation by women and girls in education at all levels and develop programmes that provide training to women in business skills;

(b) Undertake legislative and administrative reforms to create a strong enabling environment for women entrepreneurs, which includes a sound macroeconomic framework; accountable systems for managing public resources; and an attractive investment climate, competitive markets, enforceable contracts, the absence of corruption, regulatory policies that engender public confidence in the market, clear property and inheritance rights and reduced barriers to international trade;

(c) Promote the collection, dissemination, and analysis of statistics that are disaggregated by gender to facilitate better monitoring of the situation of women, including education, employment opportunity, income, ownership and access to finance;

(d) Eliminate discrimination in the work place, providing equal opportunity for the hiring and advancement of women;

(e) Facilitate further development of the financial sector to increase women's access to savings, lending, and other financial services, through incentives and development of intermediaries that serve the needs of women entrepreneurs in both rural and urban areas, and to include women in their leadership, planning, and decision-making;

(f) Encourage business organizations, non-governmental organizations, professional associations, cooperatives, revolving loan funds, credit unions, grass-roots organizations, women's self-help groups and other groups to develop and provide services to women entrepreneurs;

(g) Enhance rural women's income-generating potential, noting the importance of the agricultural sector in the poorest countries and the importance of greater security of land tenure and property ownership for resource mobilization and environmental stewardship;

(h) Promote government and civil society programmes that can enhance the economic opportunity of vulnerable women, such as widows, women with disabilities, elderly women, women belonging to racial and ethnic minorities, refugees, and internally displaced persons and encourage the formation of institutions and associations that develop and provide services to women entrepreneurs, particularly in rural areas;

(i) Promote equal access for women to information and communication technology-based economic activities, such as small business and home-based employment, and to information systems and improved technologies, and further develop tele-centres, community access points and business incubators;

2. *Encourages* all relevant United Nations funds, programmes and the specialized agencies, in accordance with their respective mandates, to assist Governments in strengthening their capacity to reform laws, practices and institutions in order to promote women's entrepreneurship;

3. *Requests* the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of these measures to the Commission on the Status of Women at its fiftieth session.